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New York

President:	Ms. Wronecka	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alfassam
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; His Excellency Mr. Ismail Wais, Intergovernmental Authority on Development Special Envoy for South Sudan; and Ms. Jackline Nasiwa, Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice.

Mr. Wais and Ms. Nasiwa are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa and Juba, respectively.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lacroix, Mr. Wais and Ms. Nasiwa. I will provide a briefing in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix: I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity provided to colleagues of the African Union, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and myself to update the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan.

Today's meeting is timely as we look ahead to the next round of peace talks at the High-level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa. While I will principally speak about key developments in the country since we last briefed the Security Council in March (see S/PV.8197), it is paramount that I underscore to the Security Council that the peace process is at a critical juncture.

Heading into the next round of the High-level Revitalization Forum, the parties remain far apart on the critical issues of governance and security. The parties continue to argue over the ministerial quotas in any revised transitional Government arrangement, while agreement on the modalities of the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements, including security arrangements for Juba and security sector reform, remains elusive. While the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has worked to try and narrow the gap in advance of the talks — which I am sure Special Envoy Ambassador Wais will tell us more about — the continued divergence in the positions of the parties was underscored by Government and opposition officials to Assistant-Secretary-General Keita, who has just returned from South Sudan and Ethiopia.

While President Kiir and his Government have repeatedly pledged to participate constructively in the High-level Revitalization Forum, rhetoric around the unilateral extension of the mandate of the Transitional Government of National Unity and the preparation of subsequent elections, should the High-level Revitalization Forum fail to yield an "acceptable" solution, is increasing. Those were the messages given to Assistant-Secretary-General Keita while she was in Juba three weeks ago.

Meanwhile, two weeks ago, the Transitional National Legislative Assembly was presented with a draft constitutional amendment bill, which would incorporate the 2015 Peace Agreement into the Transitional Constitution at a time when the very agreement is under review at the High-level revitalization Forum. Finally, last week, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) held an extraordinary meeting of its National Liberation Council with the overall objective of advancing peace through the reunification of the SPLM and the holding of elections. Several foreign dignitaries were also in attendance. While efforts aimed at the reunification of the SPLN are noteworthy, a unified and coordinated approach by all regional and international partners in support of an inclusive political initiative is critical at this juncture in the peace process.

Two weeks ago, I also met with Ambassador Francis Deng, a member of the national dialogue steering committee, who was making rounds to give briefings on the progress of the national dialogue. Apparently, grass-roots consultations have been completed and next steps include the launching of a constitutional review process, which would incorporate the outcomes of the consultations and set the framework for elections. June 2018 was cited as the date for completion of that process.

Concurrently, however, I had an opportunity to raise these developments with a visiting delegation of the South Sudan Council of Churches. In their estimation, the national dialogue has not been an inclusive process, with many South Sudanese constituents residing in largely Opposition-controlled territories being excluded from the local level consultations. Moreover, the delegation was frank about the serious violations that both sides continued to commit against civilians and expressed concern at the steady deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation in the country.

The aim of grass-roots consultation is laudable, but must be considered alongside other political processes and must be inclusive; at the moment this is not the case, with the majority of opposition parties boycotting what they consider to be a flawed process.

It is our firm belief that the holding of elections in the current political, security and humanitarian environment is unrealistic and would be counter-productive. As we are all aware, despite the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in December 2017, both the Government and the Opposition have remained bent on armed confrontation, controlling territory and forcing civilian displacement. In such a situation, it is always the civilians who suffer, as they are the ones who bear the brunt of the violence. It is especially disconcerting that between the adjournment of the High-level Revitalization Forum talks in February and now, a period in which we would have expected the parties to reflect on what compromises could be made to end the violence in South Sudan and sow the seeds of peace, military operations between the SPLA and the SPLA-in-Opposition have escalated. There are no signs of meaningful implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, and a ceasefire remains a distant prospect.

We meet today on the heels of increased hostilities in Unity state between the SPLA and the SPLA-in-Opposition forces aimed at displacing populations, securing hitherto Opposition-controlled areas and supply routes between Bentiu and Leer. Reports indicate that the fighting, which resumed around the third week of April north of Mayendit and subsequently spread to areas north and south east of Leer, has resulted in mass civilian displacement, including reports of civilians fleeing into the surrounding swamplands and into the temporary protection areas adjacent to the temporary base operated in Leer by UNMISS, to escape indiscriminate violence and the burning and looting of property.

At present there are 1,744 internally displaced persons seeking refuge in the temporary protection area. UNMISS has reported the SPLA mobilization of armoured personnel carriers to clear the routes and that it has heard artillery fire. On 26 April, hostilities near Leer found the UNMISS temporary operating base subject to overhead fire. I should also add that, amid the increasing hostilities, humanitarian partners have been forced to evacuate from most of the affected areas, interrupting a range of activities, including those related to health, education, nutrition and water and sanitation for thousands of people.

Against this marked deterioration of the security situation, Special Representative Shearer travelled to Leer last week and saw at first hand the devastating results of the clashes, including deserted villages, burnt tukuls and ransacked health facilities, as well as civilians — including children — injured as a result of the fighting. During his mission to the affected areas, he met with both Government and Opposition authorities and urged the parties to respect the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and reign in their forces. In the meantime, the Mission has dispatched a rapid investigation team from its human rights division to verify numerous reports of civilians being deliberately targeted by military forces allied to the SPLA and bands of youth during these operations, including being burnt alive in tukuls and pursued into the swamps. Insecurity has also increased in Jonglei, with the SPLA's successful resupply of its position in Waat and subsequent clashes in and around Opposition-controlled Akobo and its environs. Meanwhile, reports of clashes across parts of Central Equatoria state also continue.

I would like to add at this point that sexual violence remains a prominent feature of the conflict. The UNMISS human rights rapid investigation team deployed to document the impact of recent fighting in Unity state, in Leer and in surrounding areas has received several disturbing accounts of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape of young girls and gang rape. These latest reports only compound what we already know to be a desperate situation for women and girls in South Sudan, who continue to be the victims of appalling levels of violence. We must respond, and respond quickly, to ensure accountability for these violations and abuses and bring an end to these heinous acts once and for all.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate as a direct result of the protracted conflict. Nearly 4.3 million people have been displaced to date, including 1.7 million internally and 2.5 million across borders. In March, United Nations agencies reported that conflict-induced displacement was worsening the country's already dire food security situation, and anticipated that food security will continue to deteriorate with the upcoming lean season from May to July, likely to be the worst ever experienced in the country.

Against this dire background, however, aid workers continue to be a target in this conflict. Since the crisis began in 2013, approximately 100 aid workers have been killed, with numerous others targeted for attack or kidnapping. This is simply unacceptable in a context where these very individuals are racing against time to save lives.

UNMISS continues its efforts to protect civilians through an expansion of its protection activities, and is also working hand in hand with partners to respond to the worsening humanitarian situation, as well as supporting resilience and reconciliation efforts at the grass-roots level wherever possible. Success, however, is relative in this complex environment of active fighting and persistent insecurity.

It is against that backdrop that I reiterate that there must be a tangible cost for the continuation of violence in South Sudan. There must be consequences for blatant violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and broken promises to protect civilians. As a first step in that direction, I encourage the Security Council to urge IGAD to make public the ceasefire-violations reports drafted by the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism. The Mechanism is working to monitor and verify the reported violations, but these reports have yet to be published and deliberated on. Without consequences, we have no one to blame but ourselves for allowing the crisis to escalate unchecked and perpetuating a lack of confidence in a political solution to the crisis.

Finally, I also wish to urge the Security Council to use its voice to dispel this unhealthy narrative of regime change that some of South Sudan's leaders would like to use against the United Nations and the international community in a bid to win popular support. This narrative serves no one and only sows seeds of hate and paranoia in a country facing significant challenges and where localized violence is becoming endemic.

The President: I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Wais.

Mr. Wais: I thank you, Madam President, for inviting me to brief the Security Council today on the status of the implementation of the High-level Revitalization Forum on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The Council will recall that I was given the task of supporting the IGAD Council of Ministers in order to facilitate the process leading to the revitalization of the 2015 South Sudan Peace Agreement. The mandate of the revitalization entails bringing together the parties to the Agreement and estranged groups deliberating and agreeing on the following parameters of the Peace Agreement: first, concrete measures to restore the permanent ceasefire; secondly, steps to restore the peaceful and inclusive implementation of the Peace Agreement, and, thirdly, a revised and realistic timeline for its implementation leading to a democratic election at the end of the transitional period.

Pursuant to this mandate, my briefing will focus on progress made in the revitalization process since the previous briefing I made to the Council (see S/PV.8192). I will also highlight the outstanding issues in the revitalization process, including the remedial actions undertaken to address them, and I will conclude with the way forward.

The Council will recall that the revitalization has been conducted in phases. The first phase of the Revitalization Forum was successfully facilitated by the IGAD mediators and culminated in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, on the protection of civilians and humanitarian actors, signed by the parties in December 2017. That was followed by the second phase, convened in February. In line with the first two objectives of the revitalization, which I have just highlighted, the second phase of the Forum was dedicated to discussing ways of restoring a full and inclusive Government and the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangement during the transitional period. Efforts during that phase of the talks were invested in reviewing the relevant chapters of the 2015 South Sudan peace

agreement, which dealt primarily with governance and security issues.

At the time of the adjournment of this phase of the forum, we had made significant progress towards the revitalization goals. Following structured deliberations and intensive discussions, the parties and stakeholders reached consensus on specific articles on governance and security, and initialed those provisions. Despite that progress, there remain some outstanding governance and security issues. Cognizant of the wide gaps, the South Sudanese parties and stakeholders at the talks urged the IGAD Council of Ministers to intensify its efforts to engage and assist them in making the necessary compromises to resolve the outstanding issues according to the IGAD Council of Ministers decision during its sixty-first extraordinary session, held on 26 March, in Addis Ababa to conduct shuttle diplomacy between the parties in order to narrow the existing gaps in their position and reach consensus.

Since 10 April, the IGAD Council and I have engaged the South Sudanese parties and stakeholders, including civil society and the South Sudanese Opposition Alliance, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition, other political parties and the Transitional Government of National Unity. The Council also held a discussion with Salva Kiir, President of the Republic of South Sudan. During the shuttle diplomacy, the IGAD Council of Ministers heard the views of the parties and stakeholders on the outstanding issues and the entire revitalization process. It believes that there remain significant differences on outstanding issues.

In that regard, the Council of Ministers will include to enhance its engagement with the parties to bridge the outstanding gaps. As such, the Council of Ministers has invited the parties to an intensive session of deliberations aimed at identifying possible areas of compromise ahead of the resumption of the talks. That meeting will convene in Addis Ababa ahead of the resumption of the Forum, which commences 17 May.

The other challenge that could potentially undermine the credibility of the current peace process is the persistent violation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement by some parties. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism has been documenting and reporting violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. There is therefore a need to hold violators and spoilers accountable in order to deter impunity. Without consequences for violation of the Agreement, it will be difficult to instil trust among the parties and stakeholders participating in the peace process. The credibility of the revitalization process would be at risk, and adherence to outcomes of the revitalized peace agreement would also be difficult to guarantee.

I commend the Security Council for its sustained effort towards restoring peace and stability in the Republic of South Sudan and its support for the revitalization process. Finally, I urge the Council to continue its support to IGAD and the region in pursuit of sustainable peace and stability in the Republic of South Sudan. It is also critical that the Council support IGAD and the African Union whenever they take measures against violators of the peace process.

The President: I thank Mr. Wais for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Nasiwa.

Ms. Nasiwa: On behalf of the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice, allow me to sincerely express my appreciation to Poland for inviting me to brief the Security Council. I am honoured to speak to the Council today on the situation in South Sudan as a civil society leader and on behalf of the suffering South Sudanese people, who have not known peace.

The 2011 referendum brought new hope of liberty, prosperity and unity to the people of South Sudan. But that hope was shattered by fighting among the political leadership of the country from 2013 to date. As women, we witness and experience gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law, as well as death, mass displacement, sexual abuse and rape. Although we are resilient, we are frustrated as our leaders fail to deliver a lasting political settlement to the crisis. We have watched our young children recruited to fight a senseless war. Our homes and our communities have become unsafe due to increased insecurity, continued fighting by the warring parties, increased rebellions by estranged groups, militia and unknown gunmen, inter-ethnic and communal cattle disputes. We are deeply worried about the future as the transitional period comes to an end amid the continued fighting.

We urge all the parties and the Government to commit to the High-level Revitalization Forum process as a priority and prerequisite for a peaceful transition and inclusive, fair and free elections. We applaud the efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on

Development (IGAD), the Security Council, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), faith-based leaders and civil society in working to secure peace and stability in South Sudan. However, the Council should note that, although the revitalization of the peace agreement is a premise for a stable, prosperous and peaceful South Sudan, the continued violation of its provisions undermines any stabilization efforts within the country. The IGAD High-level Revitalization Forum, which has been inclusive to date, is an opportunity for the parties and other estranged groups to make compromises for the sake of peace.

My organization recommends an enforcement mechanism, monitoring, reporting and strict adherence to declared ceasefires. We call upon IGAD, the African Union and the Security Council to expedite the establishment of transitional justice institutions. Chapter V of the peace agreement, on transitional justice, with a special focus on sexual violence against women, must be preserved. A gender-sensitive approach to the monitoring and reporting of ceasefire violations is also essential, as is the need to reform governance, justice, security institutions and for a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programme. The competing geopolitical and regional interests within IGAD countries and the unlimited IGAD mandate further erodes the prospects for peace. I call on the Security Council to remain united and put more time and resources into ensuring that an inclusive IGAD process, supported by the African Union, reaches a final settlement without further delay The Council should provide support to women leaders and civil society groups during the transitional period through funding and capacity-building for a gendered and inclusive political process.

UNMISS remains critical and relevant to South Sudan, especially with regard to the protection of civilians, internally displaced persons and others in conflict-affected areas, as military and para-military groups and individuals continue to target women at water, firewood collection and food-gathering points. Women and children are frequently raped, sexually abused, tortured or killed. Victims suffer stigma, trauma, mental disorders, unwanted pregnancies and rejection by their husbands, as well as diseases, including HIV/AIDS. UNMISS should consult and work with civil society organizations, women and community leaders on conflict sensitivity and early-warning to develop and adopt a gender-sensitive approach to civilian protection.

I furthermore call for a speedy recruitment and full deployment of the Regional Protection Force, through the African Union, to Juba and other areas. It should be noted that, as the capital, Juba has experienced relative peace and calm owing to the presence and patrols by the Regional Protection Force. With the presence of UNMISS in Yei, civilians have begun to return, and the Lutaya market and shops, for example, have reopened.

We are disturbed by allegations of sexual harassment and abuse by UNMISS peacekeepers in Wau and in other sites. However, we welcome the strong stance by the Secretary-General with regard to his zero tolerance towards sexual abuse. We call upon UNMISS to expedite the investigations of its peacekeepers and make the reports public. We call for a United Nations policy and action on mainstreaming orientation and enforcing training on sexual harassment for its peacekeepers and United Nations police, as a critical element for disciplined peacekeeping missions.

Civil society is not an enemy. Civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring and bridging the gap between the Government and citizens through the delivery of humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, the protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance. However, civil society representatives are often arrested, threatened intimidated or killed owing to their work. The diminishing space for civil society operations has forced some of the leaders to leave the country. For example, members of civil society are required to get permission by all sides to a conflict before carrying out their activities. The Security Council needs to express support for the important role civil society plays by speaking out against those actions.

I once more thank and commend the Security Council for allowing me to discuss the current situation in my country and the unbearable suffering of my fellow citizens. I believe that this Council meeting will bring peace to South Sudan and our suffering will come to an end. I conclude by saying *ana taban* — the people are tired. We need peace now.

The President: I thank Ms. Nasiwa for her briefing.

I shall now provide a briefing in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South

Sudan, on developments in the Committee since the outgoing briefing of my predecessor on 8 December 2017 (see S/PV.8127). I intend to focus on the recommendations set out in the final report of the Panel of Experts (see S/2018/292), which was submitted to the Committee on 14 March and published as a document of the Council on 12 April, and which was discussed by the Committee members on 11 April. I will also provide a brief overview of developments in the Committee since the start of the year to date, as well as what is expected in the weeks ahead.

I will not repeat in detail the findings of the final report, given that it was transmitted to the members of the Council and is now published as an official document. Let me only remind Council members that the Panel of Experts has presented its findings with regard to the political and security situation in South Sudan; violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; obstruction of humanitarian and peacekeeping missions; arms procurement and the implementation of the sanctions measures in South Sudan. Based on those findings, the Panel made three recommendations in its final report. Consistent with the Panel's conclusion that the patterns of the conflict reported to the Council earlier have persisted, those recommendations may be familiar to Council members as well.

First, in an appeal to the international community to apply more pressure on the parties, and while underscoring that without that the situation is likely only to deteriorate, with enormous humanitarian and regional security implications, the Panel reiterated its recommendation from its first report, of August 2015 (see S/2015/656), that the Security Council impose an arms embargo on South Sudan. Given that this recommendation was addressed to the Council, the Committee took note of it, but did not take any action on it.

Secondly, while underlining that impunity continued to prevail in the country, the Panel renewed its recommendation addressed to the Committee to consider designating additional individuals and entities. The Panel reiterated that there had been no sanctions listings since the designation of six individuals on 1 July 2015, and that it had submitted to the Committee specific statements of cases on a number of individuals responsible for, or complicit in, actions and policies described in paragraph 9 of resolution 2290 (2016), including those responsible for the conditions that have resulted in the unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The Committee took note of that recommendation, as it did last year.

Finally, in response to the Panel's third recommendation, the Committee agreed to send letters to the members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, reiterating the importance of those States' obligation to enforce the asset freeze established under resolution 2206 (2015) and to specifically request that the bank accounts and assets of designated individuals Marial Chanuong Yol Mangok and Gabriel Jok Riak to be frozen.

I would now like to provide a brief overview of the Committee's work since my predecessor's briefing to the Council last December.

On 11 April, following the consideration of the Panel's final report, the Committee was briefed by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mrs. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter. As also reflected in the press release issued pursuant to the meeting, the Committee received the alarming update that grave violations against children had increased considerably over the course of last year, as compared to the previous two years. The United Nations had verified over 1,000 incidents of all six grave violations against children identified by resolution 1261 (1999), on children and armed conflict, affecting close to 1,400 children in South Sudan. In particular, the recruitment and use of children, by all parties to the conflict, was described as endemic. Children were not just used on an ad hoc basis to temporarily boost military capacities of parties to the conflict or to provide services. Instead, it was determined that the children of South Sudan were being used to fuel the war and abused in a systematic and sustained manner, which enabled war efforts to continue.

During the meeting held on 11 April, I reminded the Committee of my intention to conduct the first visit in my capacity as Chair of the Committee in mid-June. Earlier, I had informally discussed it with the Permanent Representative of South Sudan and received a positive response. As agreed by Committee members, I will visit South Sudan and other countries in the region — Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda — to gain a first-hand account of the implementation of the sanctions measures in place regarding South Sudan. Additionally, as part of the second trip on behalf of the

Committee since its establishment in 2015, the country visits will provide an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and engagement with the States concerned with regard to the implementation of the sanctions regime. I intend to brief the 2206 Committee on my meetings and observations upon my return to New York.

In the lead-up to my visit, the Committee will hold its first open briefing on 31 May with States of the region and all interested Member States to hear views concerning the Panel's final report and the overall implementation of sanctions measures concerning South Sudan. Beyond regular Committee meetings, I intend to hold "informal informals" for interested members of the Committee at the Permanent Mission of Poland, such as the gathering this past Friday with a representative of a non-governmental organization dealing with South Sudan.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ambassador Ismail Wais, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Special Envoy for South Sudan; and Ms. Nasiwa, for their respective briefings on the situation in South Sudan. We also thank you, Madam President, in your capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, for your briefing on the Committee's activities within the framework of the implementation of the sanctions regime involving that country. Those briefings apprise us of the continued threats that are hindering the process of exiting the crisis in South Sudan. My statement will focus on the following issues: the political process, the security situation, the humanitarian situation and the human rights situation in South Sudan.

Concerning the political process, my delegation regrets the lack of genuine commitment by the parties to the conflict to search for a viable solution to the crisis in South Sudan, despite repeated calls from the international community and initiatives taken by IGAD, which Côte d'Ivoire commends for its tireless work. My delegation welcomes the diplomatic efforts of Ambassador Wais, as well as those of the representatives of the IGAD Council of Ministers, aimed at holding consultations with the parties to the conflict so as to overcome their differences and thereby facilitate discussions during the resumption of the High-level Revitalization Forum on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Côte d'Ivoire hopes that those consultations will enable actors to reconcile their differences concerning the governance and security issues that came up during the second phase of the Revitalization Forum, held in Addis Ababa from 5 to 16 February. My country urges the parties to demonstrate political will and become meaningfully involved in finding a political solution so as reach sustainable agreements on sharing power among members of the Transitional Government of National Unity and on security issues at the third phase of the Revitalization Forum, to be held from 17 to 21 May 2018 — in less than 10 days — in Addis Ababa. The people of South Sudan have suffered for too long and deserve peace and stability at long last. It is time for the parties to the conflict to give the peace process a meaningful chance.

Concerning the security situation, it is clear that, almost five years since the conflict in South Sudan began, the security situation remains worrisome. Despite the fact that the parties to the conflict signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access on 21 December 2017 and their renewed commitment to respect it during the second phase of the Revitalization Forum on the peace process in February, the protection of civilians and humanitarian access are significant challenges that need to be addressed. My delegation is concerned about continuing clashes and reports of high levels of violence in Unity, Jonglei and Equatoria states. It is also concerned about the magnitude of the ethnic dimension of the conflict. My country therefore calls on the warring parties to cease hostilities and to respect the commitments made during the first two phases of the High-level Revitalization Forum on the peace process.

Concerning the humanitarian dimension, Côte d'Ivoire is concerned about the escalation of violence and clashes in certain areas, which has led to the displacement of thousands of people and hindered humanitarian work. With more than 4 million displaced persons and refugees and more than 7 million people at risk of food insecurity, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan is one of the most dire of its kind in the world. Given that, it is urgent that the international community and humanitarian organizations be

allowed to respond to humanitarian needs and provide assistance to those populations in urgent need within a secure environment. My delegation reiterates its appeal to the various parties to respect unconditionally the agreement of 21 December 2017, which demands, inter alia, unhindered access for humanitarian workers. In that regard, my country firmly condemns the detention of humanitarian workers, as well as any other act aimed at preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid.

With regard to the human rights situation, Côte d'Ivoire is concerned about allegations of continued human rights violations and the destruction of property and the livelihoods of the people. My country encourages the South Sudan Transitional Government of National Unity and the African Union Commission to step up the establishment of the Hybrid Court of South Sudan, responsible for prosecuting those responsible for crimes under the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Côte d'Ivoire continues to believe that the establishment and operationalization of the Hybrid Court will contribute to bringing about peace and decreasing human rights violations. We welcome the release by armed groups of more than 200 children on 17 April. While we remind all those involved in the South Sudan conflict that the recruitment or use of children in armed conflicts is prohibited, my country urges them to do more to protect children and to speed up the release of those who remain in their charge.

My country congratulates you, Madam, for the work that you have done in your capacity as Chair of the 2206 Committee and reaffirms its support for your forthcoming visit to South Sudan and other countries in the region.

In conclusion, my country calls on Members of the United Nations, in particular the countries of the region, to ensure strict compliance with the sanctions imposed on South Sudan. That would contribute to bringing stability to a country devastated by conflict that has gone on too long.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Special Envoy to South Sudan, Mr. Ismael Wais, and Ms. Jackline Nasiwa for their briefings. Similarly, we thank you, Madam President, for your briefing and leadership at the helm of the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan.

Unfortunately, the situation in South Sudan remains one of the most critical in the world. The constant deterioration of security, the slow progress in the political process and the complicated economic situation are exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, which is increasingly difficult to control and affects a large swath of the population. Given that complex backdrop, we are aware that it is very difficult to find an immediate solution, especially if deep divides persist between the parties. It is regrettable that the clashes have continued despite the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, in December 2017.

For that reason, it is essential to work towards reconciliation between the parties to the conflict, and we therefore highlight the recent progress made in the 2015 agreement on the reunification of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. We also acknowledge the recent statement by President Salva Kiir calling for the return of the opposition leader, Riek Machar, to Juba, which, if done, could ease tensions on the ground.

We also welcome IGAD's efforts and commitment, which continues its work to bring the Government and opposition groups to the negotiating table through the High-level Revitalization Forum of the peace process. However, it is clear that the process will not have the expected results until the parties take the commitments made seriously and show real political will to deliver on them. We expect full participation and flexibility from the parties in the next phase of the forum, scheduled from 17 to 21 May.

The humanitarian situation, as I mentioned, remains alarming. The data presented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs show us a very difficult reality, in which more than half of the world's population needs humanitarian assistance. Millions of refugees and internally displaced persons face a lack of basic services, severe food insecurity and disease outbreaks. We call on the international community to continue to cooperate to ensure humanitarian assistance in South Sudan.

South Sudan today is one of the most dangerous places in the world for humanitarian workers. We deeply regret the deaths of three of them last month, with approximately 100 deaths since 2013. We condemn the attacks on humanitarian workers and urgently call on the Government and opposition groups to ensure

unhindered and safe access for humanitarian assistance, within the framework of respect for international humanitarian law and an optimal operational environment for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. In the same vein, we call on the parties to uphold the status of forces agreement and take concrete measures to prevent any breaches.

Another aspect that we believe is important to mention is the request made by the delegation from the African Union Peace and Security Council during its visit to South Sudan last month, in which it called for greater cooperation in the establishment of the Hybrid Court to advance the fight against impunity. On the other hand, with regard to the recommendations of the Panel of Experts, we agree that the Security Council should avail itself of all the tools at its disposal to adopt measures against those who sabotage or do not comply with the outcomes of the IGAD process.

In conclusion, there is a need for regional and subregional organizations, the United Nations and the international community at large to join forces in support of IGAD's efforts. We, the members of the Security Council, have agreed that the only way to resolve the conflict in South Sudan is through a process of inclusive and sincere political dialogue between the parties to implement the 2015 Agreement.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank you, Madam President, for the information you have provided in your capacity as Chair of Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for the hard work he has carried out in the context of his responsibilities and especially for the excellent briefing he delivered. In the same vein, we would also like to thank Mr. Ismael Wais, Special Envoy of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Ms. Jackline Nasiwa of the Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice.

The Government of Equatorial Guinea once again commends the hard work and outstanding efforts of IGAD, the African Union and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to bring the warring parties closer to constructive and direct dialogue in search of peace and stability in South Sudan. We believe that the participation of the parties in the round of consultations to be held in Addis Ababa from 10 to 12 May will be crucial in providing continuity and reorienting the dialogues during the third phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum.

However, it should be noted that the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is entirely dismayed and concerned by the content of the latest reports and statements received on the situation in South Sudan. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations submitted an information sheet on violations of the UNMISS status of forces agreement, in which, among other obligations, the Government of South Sudan undertook to take

> "all appropriate measures to ensure the security and safety of UNMISS, its members and associated personnel and their property and assets".

Without going into each of the violations set out in the information sheet, we would like to remind the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the other parties involved that, in addition to seeking peace, there is a humanitarian obligation to save lives and help the millions of South Sudanese who are facing poverty, food insecurity and a shortage of basic services. The fulfilment of that responsibility will be a success only if humanitarian operations are facilitated and the threats and risks faced by humanitarian assistance organizations and their courageous staff are eliminated. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea urges the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to cooperate with UNMISS, so that together they may achieve the sole objective, which is none other than to grant the peace and stability that the people of South Sudan deserve.

For my country's Government, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains unacceptable. The constant, increasing and ongoing violations of human rights, and especially the violations perpetrated against children in armed conflicts, which are even used as tools of war, were confirmed by the report presented on 11 April by Mrs. Virginia Gamba de Potgieter, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015). That practice must cease immediately. To that end, we urge the department of child protection to carry out its work to monitor and denounce these serious violations in South Sudan and, in collaboration with the Government of South Sudan, to combat impunity for the perpetrators.

As we have done on previous occasions, we reiterate that it is important that the parties to the conflict refrain from taking actions that could worsen the situation and

that they take action to implement and honour the signed agreement, which entails the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians, access to humanitarian aid and an immediate return to the negotiating table. In that regard, we understand that it is of vital importance that the international community continue to support existing mediation efforts, especially those of IGAD and the African Union, and look for ways to ensure the success of the new phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum on the peace agreement.

I will conclude by expressing the joy felt by my Government at the news of the liberation of more than 200 children by armed groups in South Sudan, bringing the number of children released this year to more than 500. My Government also welcomes the news of the liberation of seven humanitarian organization workers in South Sudan, days after being detained by Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition forces in Morobo county.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Madam, upon the assumption of your duties as the President of the Security Council for the month of May. I assure you of our delegation's support and cooperation during your presidency. We look forward to your upcoming visit to South Sudan.

With your permission, Madam President, I would like to officially extend our condolences to the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire on the untimely passing of their Head of Mission.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the presence of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ambassador Ismail Wais, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Special Envoy for South Sudan, as well as Ms. Jackline Nasiwa, in Juba.

My delegation would like to make the following brief observations for the record regarding the final report of the Panel of Experts (see S/2018/292).

First, we are dismayed that the report is openly tilted against the Government and its senior officials. Although the Panel has been visiting Juba, it mainly cites sources and information taken from interviews conducted with members of the opposition in Nairobi and Kampala. Government senior officials are mentioned repeatedly as hardliners in order to paint their strong verbal defence of the Government as an obstacle to peace. One cannot help but deduce that the purpose of those officials being referred to in that way is to lay the ground for the justification of international sanctions against them.

Secondly, the report of the Panel of Experts is biased, in our opinion. For example, paragraph 82 states that the opposition forces

> "continue to have limited access to external arms and ammunition. The shortage of ammunition, in particular, has limited offensive operations by opposition groups in many locations. Opposition commanders reported that they were increasingly limited to small-scale guerrilla tactics, dependent on movement and the avoidance of direct confrontation with Government forces."

On the other hand, the Panel reports that the Government is still receiving arms through the region, information which leads them to recommend an arms embargo against the Government.

Thirdly, as mentioned in paragraph 77, the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations advised the Panel in an email "to carry out its activities in accordance with the mandate of the resolutions and in an objective and just manner". Indeed, we would like to associate ourselves with the response of the Chinese Mission — that the Panel ought to confine its investigation to the boundaries and time frame of its mandate. In trying to establish certain facts, connections and associations, the Panel has been looking and reporting on events and arrangements that happened before 15 December 2013 in South Sudan. The Panel is even going after family members of those who are under sanctions, because of information provided by the opposition.

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan is committed to cooperating with the Panel of Experts in order to quickly end the crisis in South Sudan. But, unfortunately, this report is full of one-sided examples against the Government, which brings into question the neutrality and the fairness of the Panel. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan would like to see a panel that is constituted by the Council to investigate and report credible and balanced findings to the Council in order for it to adopt fair, credible and realistic resolutions. Calling for an arms embargo based on this report aims only at punishing the Government, but will not end the war or bring peace to South Sudan. If we

may humbly state, the Council ought to focus on other effective means of ending war and bring about lasting peace in South Sudan, rather than risk prolonging it.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate and assure the Security Council of my Government's commitment to cooperate with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and of its continued commitment to finding lasting solutions to the various challenges facing the Mission and the various humanitarian actors in South Sudan.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.